

Letter to Congressional Leaders on Social Security Reform Legislation February 29, 2000

Dear Mr. Speaker: (Dear Mr. Leader:)

I am pleased that Congress is moving forward with a bill that eliminates the retirement earnings test above the normal retirement age. As I said in my 1999 State of the Union Address, “we should eliminate the limits on what seniors on Social Security can earn.” The retirement earnings test was created during the Great Depression to encourage older workers to retire in order to open up more jobs for younger workers. As the baby boomers begin to retire, it is more important than ever that older Americans who are willing and able to work, should not have their Social Security benefits deferred when they do.

We should reward every American who wants to and can stay active and productive. I encourage Congress to send me a clean, straightforward bill to eliminate the retirement earnings test above the normal retirement age.

Eliminating the retirement earnings test above the normal retirement age is a first step toward Social Security reform. I remain committed to making bipartisan progress on Social Security this year. I ask Congress to pass legislation that would extend the solvency of Social Security

to about 2050 while taking significant actions to reduce poverty among elderly women. Last year I transmitted legislation to Congress that would have used the interest savings earned by paying down the debt to make Social Security stronger. If we agree to this simple step, we can extend the life of Social Security to the middle of the next century while also modernizing Social Security to reduce poverty among elderly women.

Moving forward on these two, simple steps would be a substantial downpayment on Social Security reform. It would demonstrate that we can work together, building the bipartisan trust necessary to finish the job of meeting the long-term Social Security challenge.

Sincerely,

WILLIAM J. CLINTON

NOTE: Identical letters were sent to J. Dennis Hastert, Speaker of the House of Representatives; Richard A. Gephardt, House minority leader; Trent Lott, Senate majority leader; and Thomas A. Daschle, Senate minority leader. An original was not available for verification of the content of this letter.

Remarks at a Reception for Congressional Candidate Elaine Bloom in Miami, Florida February 29, 2000

Thank you. Well, I was looking out at the beautiful vista—first, I was looking down on you. Did you see me up there? And I was looking at this magnificent home and thinking how fortunate we are, all of us, to be in this country at this moment, to be free citizens, to be able to come here to support someone in whom we believe.

I want to begin by thanking Phil and Pat Frost. They have been with me a long time, too, and I am honored to be here in their magnificent home. I want to thank all of you who helped to spearhead this immensely successful event for Elaine tonight. I want to say that I’m

glad that her children, David and Anne, are here, and I’m sorry the judge couldn’t come. But far be it for us to get him in trouble. We want him to stay on the bench and make good decisions. *[Laughter]*

I want to say how grateful I am for the friendship and support I have enjoyed from Congressman Peter Deutsch and his wife, Lori, who is here. And I thank them so much for their service to the United States. And Representative Sally Heyman, we’re glad you’re here.

And I want to say a special word of thanks to my longtime personal friend Bill Nelson. I